

improvement derivable from them, and at the same time as little coincide or be infected with their moral spirit, as in the present age we venerate their mythological vanities.

In the mean time, one cannot believe that any man, who seriously reflects how absolutely the religion of Christ claims a conformity of his whole nature will without regret feel himself animated with a class of sentiments, of which the habitual prevalence would be the total preclusion of Christianity.

And it seems to show how little this religion is really understood, or even considered, in any of the countries denominated Christian, that so many who profess to adopt it never once thought of guarding their own minds, and those of their children, against the eloquent seductions of so opposite a spirit. Probably they would be more intelligent and vigilant, if any other interest than that of their professed religion were endangered. But a thing which injures them only in *that* concern, is sure to meet with all possible indulgence.

With respect to religious parents and preceptors, whose children and pupils are to receive that liberal education which must inevitably include the study of these great works, it will be for them to accompany the youthful readers throughout, with an effort to show them, in the most pointed manner, the inconsistency of many of the sentiments, both with moral rectitude in general, and with the special dictates of Christianity. And in order to give the requisite force to those dictates, it will be an important duty to illustrate to them the amiable tendency, and to prove the awful authority, of this dispensation of religion. This careful effort will often but partially prevent the mischief; but it seems to be all that can be done.

Virgil's work is a kind of lunar reflection of the ardent effulgence of Homer; surrounded, if I may extend the figure, with a beautiful halo of elegance and tenderness. So much more refined an order of sentiment might have rendered the heroic character far more attractive, to a mind that can soften as well as glow, if there had actually been a hero in the poem. But none of the personages intended for heroes take hold enough of the reader's feelings to assimilate them in moral temper. No fiction or history of human Characters and Actions will ever powerfully transfuse its